

Abstract 671

TITLE: Community-Based Organization Implements Large Scale Sexual Health Survey To Support Development of HIV Prevention Programs

AUTHORS: Elovich, R.; Mayne, T. PhD; and Bergeron, B. (Gay Men's Health Crises, New York, NY)

ISSUE: In New York City there has been no largescale studies of gay and bisexual men's sexual risk-taking and HIV testing behaviors. In addition, there has been no large-scale study to evaluate the degree to which prevention has been reaching this target population.

SETTING: Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) conducted a sexual health survey in New York City. Recruitment took place across the five boroughs at Gay Pride parades and festivals and at venues where Latino, White, and Black, and bisexual men congregated.

PROJECT: Through GMHC's Beyond 2000 (b.2K) program, we are conducting a three year Sexual Health Survey on New York City gay men. Beyond 2000 is the CDC 704 funded HIV prevention volunteer initiative that has enlisted over 2,000 diverse gay men regardless of serostatus to help in keeping uninfected gay and bisexual men uninfected. The survey will: 1. Describe the extent and nature of high risk sexual behavior in gay and bisexual men in New York; 2. Act as an indicator of the effectiveness of HIV prevention work undertaken with gay and bisexual men in New York by monitoring the population incidence of high risk sexual behavior over time; 3. Inform the targeting of HIV prevention services to gay men by comparing different populations' testing patterns, behaviors, drug use and HIV prevention service contact; 4. Support GMHC's HIV Prevention outreach efforts through acting as an intervention tool.

RESULTS: In 1998, more than 7,000 gay men completed the questionnaires. The sample includes 19% Black men, 18% Latino men, 3% Asian/Pacific Islander men, 2% men of mixed race and 56% white men from all over NYC. Data included: testing, sexual risk behaviors, STDs alcohol and drug use and contact with Prevention services.

LESSONS LEARNED: A volunteer force was able to realize the first large scale gay and bisexual sexual health survey in NYC among White, Black, Latino, and Asian men. The survey also served as an immediate outreach intervention because asking questions made the survey participants think about risk behaviors, testing, etc. Our findings include: 1. The majority of men are using condoms with anal intercourse. 2. That risk taking and unprotected anal intercourse are not monolithic: rather, men are taking risks, but making strategic decisions about what those risks are and how to limit them. Most people who are having unprotected sex are doing it with someone who they believe to be the same serostatus as themselves, and 2/3 of those who aren't are doing it with only single partner in the course of a year. 3. HIV prevention work needs to include interventions to help gay men think through harm reduction for themselves in terms of values they attach to their sexual practices and relationships, the attendant risks and then realistic risk reduction strategies.

PRESENTER CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Bob Bergeron

Address: 119 West 24th Street, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10011

Telephone: (212) 367-1358

Fax: (212) 367-1370

E-mail: bobb@gmhc.org